

Message Text

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ACTION PM-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-10 IO-13 ADP-00 MBFR-03 SSO-00

NSCE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 H-02 INR-09 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12 GAC-01

SAL-01 SAJ-01 OIC-04 T-03 AEC-11 OMB-01 RSR-01 /139 W
----- 012887

P R 091844 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9564

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

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USMISSION GENEVA

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USNMR SHAPE
USDOCOSOUTH
USLOSACLANT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 02851

E. O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PARM NATO HU

SUBJECT: MBFR - BRITISH POSITION SHOWS MORE FLEXIBILITY

REF: STATE 43538

1. AS WE REPORTED TO THE DEPARTMENT IN MARCH 8 TELCONS AND NOTED IN STATE 43538, THE BRITISH HAVE NOW ADOPTED A MORE FLEXIBLE POSITION ON TACTICS FOR NEXT STEPS IN MBFR. TICKELL OBSERVED TO US THAT THEY WOULD "RELUCTANTLY" ACCEPT US APPROACH PROVIDED THERE WERE A NAC CONSENSUS FOR IT. AT SAME TIME BRITISH ARE INSISTING THAT US APPROACH BE "UNADORNED". IT IS ESSENTIAL, IN BRITISH VIEW, THAT WEST'S TACTICAL APPROACHES NOT BE MIXED UP WITH FORMULATIONS ON CONSTRAINTS OR NON- CIRCUMVENTION, AND FCO GUIDANCE TO UK NATO FOR TODAY'S NAC STRESSED THAT BRITISH WILL OPPOSE LINKING SUCH CONDITIONS WITH ABEYANCE APPROACH. BRITISH TELL US THAT THEY HAVE MADE FOREGOING POINT WITH EMPHASIS TO BOTH BELGIANS AND DUTCH.

2. TICKELL STRONGLY DOUBTED THAT RUSSIANS WOULD AGREE TO US APPROACH, AND ASKED WHAT DO WE DO WHEN IT IS REJECTED? HE HOPED THAT NAC WOULD AGREE ON A TWO- PRONGED APPROACH ALONG LINES OF VIENNA'S 1898. INSTRUCTIONS TO UK NATO HAVE AUTHORIZED ACCEPTANCE OF SUCH A TWIN PROCEDURE.

3. BRITISH CONTINUE TO HAVE SERIOUS RESERVATIONS ABOUT US FALL- BACK - CONSULTATIVE STATUS FOR HUNGARY. THEY BELIEVE THAT WEST SHOULD ONLY OFFER SUCH STATUS AS LAST RESORT AND THEN BY EXTRACTING CONCESSIONS FROM EAST IN FORM OF UNDERSTANDING THAT CONSTRAINTS/ NON- CIRCUMVENTION WOULD APPLY TO HUNGARY. TICKELL DOUBTED THAT THE RUSSIANS WOULD AGREE TO APPLICATION OF CONSTRAINTS/ NON- CIRCUMVENTION TO HUNGARY WITHOUT DEMANDING APPLICATION SUCH CONDITIONS TO NATO TERRITORY

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OUTSIDE SCOPE OF POSSIBLE MBFR AGREEMENTS. HE

INDICATED THAT THERE WAS SOME FEELING IN FCO THAT ITALY MIGHT AGREE TO HAVE NORTHERN PART OF ITS TERRITORY COVERED BY NON- CIRCUMVENTION UNDERSTANDING, BUT HE WAS NOT SPECIFIC ABOUT WHETHER BRITISH HAD ANY DEFINITE WORD ON THIS POINT FROM ITALIANS. IN ANY CASE BRITISH FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT NATO SHOULD CONSIDER MOST CAREFULLY HOW AND WHEN IT CONCEDES CONSULTATIVE STATUS TO HUNGARY; ANY HINT FROM THE WEST THAT IT MIGHT AGREE TO CONSULTATIVE STATUS FOR HUNGARY WITHOUT EXTRACTING FIRM CONCESSIONS ON CONSTRAINTS/ NON- CIRCUMVENTION AND THE GAME WOULD BE UP, TICKELL ASSERTED.

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9565
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 LONDON 02851

4. COMMENT: A COMBINATION OF CONSIDERATIONS UNDOUBTEDLY MOVED THE BRITISH TO ALTER THEIR OPPOSITION TO US APPROACH. ASIDE FROM THE GROWING ISOLATION BRITISH FELT AS PRINCIPAL HOLD-OUT, THEY PROBABLY WERE UNEASY ABOUT CONTRIBUTION THEY WERE MAKING TO UNEASE WITHIN THE ALLIANCE BY ADOPTING A RIGID STAND. TICKELL WAS A BIT DEFENSIVE IN SPEAKING TO US TODAY, SAYING THAT BRITISH HAVE NOT TRIED TO BE MISCHIEVOUS; THEY WERE MERELY SAYING TO ALLIES, PARTICULARLY THE US, IS THIS THE WAY ONE SHOULD PROCEED, AND HAVE YOU THOUGHT THROUGH THE APPROACHES YOU ARE PROPOSING. DESPITE THE FRAGMENTARY EVIDENCE REFERRED TO BY EMBASSY BONN (BONN' S 3469) THE OFFICIAL BRITISH ATTITUDE TOWARD MBFR CONTINUES UNCHANGED - DEEP RESERVATION BUT ACCEPTANCE OF THE POLITICAL FACT THAT MBFR IS IMPORTANT TO THE US AND MUST GO FORWARD, ALBEIT WITH GREAT CAUTION. TICKELL HAS COMMENTED TO US THAT WITH NUMEROUS JOURNALISTS HE HAS BEEN SEEING RECENTLY HE HAS CONSISTENTLY TAKEN THE LINE THAT WHAT IS GOING ON NOW IN VIENNA IS PRELIMINARY SKIRMISHING AND NOT ESPECIALLY NEWSWORTHY. THERE IS UNDOUBTEDLY SOME FEELING IN WHITEHALL AKIN TO CYNICISM VOICED BY PECK AT PERMREPS LUNCH MARCH 6 (US NATO 1198) BUT THIS ATTITUDE DOES NOT DESCRIBE OFFICIAL BRITISH STANCE NOR WILL IT

AFFECT IT AS LONG AS ALL MEMBERS OF THE ALLIANCE
APPROACH MBFR AS MATTER OF VITAL IMPORTANCE TO NATO
COLLECTIVELY. THE WRANGLE OVER THE HUNGARIAN PAR-
TICIPATION ISSUE HAS DISTURBED WHITEHALL AND WE
WOULD GUESS THAT THE BRITISH WILL TRY IN THE FUTURE
TO DO WHAT THEY CAN TO AVOID A REPETITION OF SUCH
CONTROVERSIAL AND STERILE DEBATES. BUT THEY HAVE
VERY DEFINITE VIEWPOINTS ABOUT MBFR AND WILL
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PROBABLY NOT, AS US DEL VIENNA SUGGESTS, TAKE A BACK
SEAT, BUT RATHER TRY TO EXERT IMPORTANT INFLUENCE
ON ALL STAGES OF MBFR TALKS AND NEGOTIATIONS.

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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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